

The Jimplecute.

Part Two.

JEFFERSON, TEXAS, DECEMBER 16, 1905.

BIRTH OF A WORLD.

At the mid-hour of a semi-tropic night, in a land not far different from this, well-nigh 2,000 years ago, a world was born. A world of hope, and courage and tenderness; a world within a world, albeit its confines were the walls of a lowly stable hid in pale Judea's hills.

No blare of trumpet, blown through the far distances of air, announced the coming of the new ruler into His own, but, down long bars of light twist heaven and earth, the white-winged angels sent sweet melodies of peace. Weaving through space in its eternal course, the rolling earth made no pause for this, the greatest event in all its history, yet, hung on high, a stranger amid the galaxy of stars guided the far-called wanderers of the night unerringly to the manger where, in He lay, dimming, for once, at least, those points of light that for so long had whitened the sullen dreariness of the desert night.

And then, sweet and low, there came to the humblest of them all, to the shepherd tending his flock through the watches of the night, the sound of angels' voices in the second Annunciation, the song of peace in place of the strife the world had known so long. Ringing, ringing, down through the vaulted heaven it fell, and he, forsooth, he thought he dreamed!

And through it all the Babe, the golden glory of the Star drifting about His head, turned in His sleep and smiled.

Nigh to the same hour another babe, he of the gold-bought kiss, wet with his tears the embroidered pillow on which he lay.

The Little Ones.

There's a patter of tiny foot-steps;
There's a chatter of broken speech;
For the very least at the Christmas feast
For the Christmas plums may reach.

And dancing feet are light-some,
And little bare feet are dear,
And late to bed goes the golden head
On the merriest night in the year.
—Margaret E. Sangster.

The Boy Spirit.

In every man there is the spirit of the boy that once dominated him. It never entirely dies out. In the coldly commercial man, whose idol is the dollar mark, the boy spirit lies dormant, but it is there, nevertheless, and can be aroused if it is only appealed to in the right way. At this, the Christmas season, every man should try to forget his stern self and be a boy again. Cut all the restraints and let the boy-nature have full sweep, for this is what Longfellow would call "the children's hour." The man who does not put away all selfishness and live the spirit of the Christmas time is an enemy to himself and to society. Let the merry Christmas spirit be unanimous.—Four-Track News.

Christmas Decorations.

The practice of "tying greens," or decorating churches and houses with evergreens at Christmas, has existed in England from very early times. The holly was thought to symbolize the Crown of Thorns, the prickly leaves standing for the thorns, the scarlet berries for the sacred drops of blood. Mistletoe has always been used in house decorations, but was not allowed in the churches on account of the association with the cruel rites of the Druids.

The King of Glory.

Before the palling of the stars,
Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cockcrow,
Jesus Christ was born;
Born in a stable,
Cradled in a manger,
In the world his hands had made
Born a stranger.

Priest and king lay fast asleep
In Jerusalem,
Young and old lay fast asleep
In crowded Bethlehem;
Saint and angel, ox and ass,
Kept a watch together
Before the Christmas daybreak
In the winter weather.

Jesus on his mother's breast
In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was he,
Shepherd of the fold;
Let us kneel with Mary maid,
With Joseph bent and hoary,
With saint and angel, ox and ass
To hail the King of Glory.
—Christina Rossetti.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

Time was, with most of us, when Christmas day encircling all our limited world like a magic ring, left nothing out for us to miss or seek; bound together all our home enjoyments, affections, and hopes; grouped everything and every one around the Christmas fire; and made the little picture shining in our bright young eyes, complete.

Time came, perhaps, all so soon! when our thoughts overleaped that narrow boundary; when there was some one (very dear, we thought then, very beautiful, and absolutely perfect) wanting to the fullness of our happiness; when we were wanting too (or we thought so, which did just as well), at the Christmas hearth by which that some one sat; and when we intertwined with every wreath and garland of our life that some one's name.

That was the time for the bright visionary Christmases which have long arisen from us to show faintly, after summer rain, in the palest edges of the rainbow! That was the time for the beatified enjoyment of the things that were to be, and never were, and yet the things that were so real in our resolute hope that it would be hard to say, now, what realities achieved since, have been stronger!

What! Did that Christmas never really come when we and the priceless pearl who was our young choice were received, after the happiest of totally impossible marriages, by the two united families previously at daggers-drawn on our account? When brothers and sisters-in-law who had always been rather cool to us before our relationship was effected, perfectly doted on us, and when fathers and mothers overwhelmed us with unlimited incomes. Was that Christmas dinner never really eaten, after which we arose, and generously and eloquently rendered honor to our late rival, present in the company, then and there exchanging friendship and forgiveness, and founding an attachment, not to be surpassed in Greek or Roman story, which subsisted until death? Has that same rival long ceased to care for that same priceless pearl, and married for money, and become usurious? Above all, do we really know, now, that we should probably have been miserable if we had won and worn the pearl, and that we are better without her?

That Christmas when we had recently achieved so much fame; when we had been carried in triumph somewhere, for doing something great and good; when we had won an honored and ennobled name, and arrived and were received at home in a shower of tears of joy; is it possible that that Christmas has not come yet?

And is our life here, at the best, so constituted that, pausing as we advance at such a noticeable milestone in the track as this great birthday,

we look back on the things that never were, as naturally and full as gravely as on the things that have been and are gone, or have been and still are? If it be so, and so it seems to be, must we come to the

conclusion, that life is little better than a dream, and little worth the loves and strivings that we crowd into it?

No! Far be such mis-called philosophy from us, dear reader, on Christmas day! Nearer and closer to our hearts be the Christmas spirit, which is the spirit of active usefulness, perseverance, cheerful discharge of duty, kindness, and forbearance! It is in the last virtues especially, that we are, or should be, strengthened by the unaccomplished visions of our youth; for, who shall say that they are not our teachers to deal gently even with the impalpable nothings of the earth!

Therefore, as we grow older, let us be more thankful that the circle of our Christmas associations and of the lessons that they bring, expands! Let us welcome every one of them and

decays, for other homes and other bands of children, not yet in being nor for ages yet to be, arise, and bloom and ripen to the end of all!

Welcome, everything! Welcome, alike what has been, and what never was, and what we hope may be, to your shelter underneath the holly, to your places round the Christmas fire, where what is sits open-hearted! In yonder shadow, do we see obtruding furtively upon the blaze, an enemy's face? By Christmas Day we forgive him! If the injury he has done us may admit of such companionship, let him come here and take his place. If otherwise, unhappily, let him go hence, assured that we will never injure nor accuse him.

On this day we shut out Nothing! "Pause," says a low voice. "Nothing? Think!"

"On Christmas day, we will shut out from our fireside, Nothing."

"Not the shadow of a vast City where the withered leaves are lying deep?" the voice replies. "Not the shadow that darkens the whole globe? Not the shadow of the City of the Dead?"

Not even that. Of all days in the year, we will turn our faces towards that City upon Christmas day, and from its silent hosts bring those we loved, among us. City of the Dead, in the blessed name wherein we are gathered at this time, and in the Presence that is here among us according to the promise, we will receive, and not dismiss, thy people who are dear to us!

Yes. We can look upon these children angels that alight, so solemnly, so beautifully, among the living children by the fire, and can hear to think how they departed from us. Entertaining angels unawares, as the Patriarchs did, the playful children are unconscious of their guests; but we can see them—can see a radiant arm around one favorite neck, as if there were a tempting of that child away. Among the celestial figures is one, a poor misshapen boy on earth, of a glorious beauty now, of whom his dying mother said it grieved her much to leave him here, alone, for so many years as it was likely would elapse before he came to her—being such a little child. But he went quickly, and was laid upon her breast, and in her hands she leads him.

There was a gallant boy, who fell, far away, upon a burning sand beneath a burning sun, and said, "Tell them at home, with my last love, how much I could have wished to kiss them once, but that I died contented and had done my duty!" Or there was another, over whom they read the words, "Therefore we commit his body to the deep!" and so consigned him to the lonely ocean and sailed on. Or there was another who lay down to his rest in the dark shadow of great forests, and, on earth, awoke no more. O shall they not, from sand and sea and forest, be brought home at such a time!—From the writings of Charles Dickens.

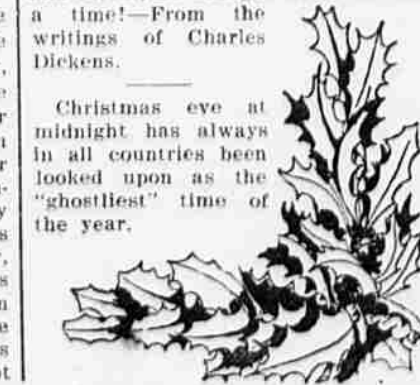
Christmas eve at midnight has always in all countries been looked upon as the "ghostliest" time of the year.



Botticelli's Madonna

summon them to take their places by the Christmas hearth.

Welcome, old aspirations, glittering creatures of an ardent fancy, to your shelter underneath the holly! We know you, and have not outlived you yet. Welcome, old projects and old loves, however, fleeting, to your nooks among the steadier lights that burn around us. Welcome, all that was ever real to our hearts; and for the earnestness that made you real, thanks to Heaven! Do we build no Christmas castles in the clouds now? Let our thoughts, fluttering like butterflies among these flowers of children, bear witness! Before this boy, there stretches out a future, brighter than we ever looked on in our old romantic time, but bright with honor and with truth. Around this little head on which the sunny curls lie heaped, the graces sport, as prettily, as airily, as when there was no scythe within the reach of Time to shear away the curls of our first-love. Upon another girl's face near it—placider but smiling bright—a quiet and contented little face, we see Home fairly written. Shining from the word, as rays shine from a star, we see how, when our graves are old, other hopes than ours are moved; how other ways are smoothed; how other happiness blooms, ripens, and decays—no, not



Christmas Coasting.

Girls often are a little neglected in the Christmas sports, says Country Life in America. For their benefit, and not omitting the boys, a coasting party may be organized, with rival bobs. Let there be a competition for distance, carried out over the level snow of the road or lake, at the foot of the drop. A marking apparatus can be constructed with evergreen lines, which will be etched out in green against the white snow.

Frankincense.



Frankincense was part of the magi's gift on the first Christmas day because it had "an odor of sweet savor," as an old legend says.

Few Hero-Princes.

The first Christmas gifts were a tribute to hope as well as to faith, to a divine administration. Most heroes come up out of common life. David, the founder, was a country lad who studied the stars incidentally, but professionally was a killer of wolves to save lambs. Few heroes are born princes. The Prince of Peace was born without place to lay his head other than that shared with the dumb world.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

Christmas is essentially a day of human good will.—George William Curtis.

May the spirit of the sweet Christmas Child possess me, may the Star of Bethlehem shine above my dwelling place.—Thomas a Kempis.

The season of regenerated feeling—the season for kindling, not merely the fire of hospitality in the hall, but the genial flames of charity in the heart.—Washington Irving.

We make a great deal of peace with heaven; Christ made much of peace on earth.—Henry Drummond.

It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself.—Charles Dickens.

I have always thought of Christmas time as a good time. A kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time.—Charles Dickens.

Lift up your eyes to the great meaning of the day, and dare to think of your humanity as something so divinely precious that it is worthy of being made an offering to God. Count it as a privilege to make that offering as complete as possible, keeping nothing back; and then go out to the pleasures and duties of your life, having been truly born anew into His divinity, as He was born into our humanity on Christmas day.—Phillips Brooks.

OH, BLESSED DAY!

O! blessed day which giveth the eternal life
To self and sense and all the brute within;
Oh, come to us, amid this war of life,
To halt and hovel: come, to all who toil
In Senate, shop or study; and to those
Who, smothered by the weight of half a world,
Blissward and sorely tempted, over face
Nature's brute powers and men unmanned to
brutes,
Come to them, blest and blessing, Christmas day.

Tell them once more the tale of Bethlehem,
The kneeling shepherds and the Babe Divine,
And keep them near, indeed, fair Christmas day.
—Charles Kingsley

Fortelling the Weather.

An old authority gives a forecast of the weather which depends on Christmas day, as follows:

"If the sun shines clear and bright on Christmas day it promises a peaceful year, free from clamors and strifes, and foretells much plenty to ensue; but if the wind blows stormy towards sunset, it betokens much sickness in the spring and autumn quarters."

Another old authority forecasts the weather as follows:

"When Christmas cometh while the moon waxeth, it shall be a very good year, and the nearer it cometh to the new moon the better shall that year be. If it cometh when the moon decreaseth, it shall be a hard year, and the nearer the latter end thereof it cometh, the worse and harder shall the year be."

Brings Peace and Joy.

The beneficence of the Christmas idea is irresistible. Creeds come and go. Dogmas swell and burst. Sects are born and pass away; but the Christian's gift of Peace and Joy, of humanity diffused, of social compunction embodied, is rapidly superseding the Herodian curse of a narrow religion, of an inhuman sectarianism and of a society of prejudice caste and hate.

Christmas Morn.

Grave statesmen carry
bundles,
And women of high degree
Merrily go with an over-
flow
Of gifts for the Christmas tree.
Cedar and pine and holly
From the deep green
woods are borne,
To garland the walls of
cabins and halls
In the sweet of Christmas morn.
—Margaret E. Sangster.